FEEDBACK

REAGAN'S CRISIS

Cont. from front page

Some have said that the US would have done better to have tried to kill Gadaffi, via a CIA or CIA-sponsored assassination plan, instead of resorting to the bombing raids. But those commentators have forgotten the nature of all wars and conflicts. A simple assassination might well have ridden the US of their worst enemy, until at least he was replaced by another of similar proportions or until their attention was focussed elsewhere, but the Libyans (and their Middle East allies) were, according to the prevailing US logic, to be taught a lesson and casualties inflicted in a way no less spectacular than one of the terrorist outrages which the raid on Tripoli was supposedly designed to prevent.

That the terrorism of both sides of the conflict will continue no one doubts. The two main actors in this mad drama have both been imprisoned within their own rhetoric and their own logic. Those who have joined in or have promised their support are also imprisoned in the same way. British prime minister, Margaret Thatcher, readily agreed to allow US bombers to fly to Libya from bases in England; had she refused, no doubt the US Administration would have used those bases anyway – Thatcher, being a realist, knew this and would not have wanted to risk the humiliation of being seen to have been 'outranked' in that way. Which ever way she moved, and given her 'debt' to the US Administration for their support during the UK/Argentinian war, she had no choice in any case but to agree to the US demand. The decision to use the bases in England was partly taken because of military factors, but was also clearly a political one. The Allies had to be seen to be cooperating, if only as a wider signal to 'greater interests' (ie, the Soviet Union) that the special UK/US relationship was no mere threat.

Finally the whole episode probably demonstrated, in a way no other recent conflict has been able to, how the 'right to defence' has become almost a monopoly of statist interests. No one wants terrorism or terrorists – state sponsored or otherwise, Libyan or US promoted – and both protagonists in the conflict have each claimed the right of defence as justification for their respective, albeit differing by degrees, outrages. But should the people in either bloc take up arms in defence against statism or global state-sponsored terrorism, then this in itself would be condemned by all states – whatever their ideological base – as being of itself terrorist.

Throughout Western Europe, in Germany, Italy, Spain, and to a far lesser extent in Britain too, there were protests on the streets against what had happened. In Germany tens of thousands took to the streets and there were many arrests. Were these protestors terrorists too? In London a number of people used pacifist tactics to voice their protests and many were arrested. Were they, too, supporters of terrorism? Mere anti-Americanism is a cop-out by those on the left. *The terrorists are already in power.* They have to be removed and their power destroyed by world-wide social revolution.

Under the same 'game rules' Reagan has decreed, Nicaragua could legitimately argue that in self defence it is entitled, had it the military hardware, to make a similar pre-emptive strike against US bases (such as Fort Bragg in Carolina) where Contra terrorists are being trained. That the terrorist raids from the Middle East will continue is not in doubt, nor the determination of Reagan to respond with exaggerated force. Exactly how many terrorist raids will it take before the decision is made to bomb while cities or even countries as part of the self-defence strategy depends upon how long tryanny is tolerated.

STATE TERRORIST

Like ragged beggars trying to steal somebody else's trousers to cover their nakedness, Reagan and Gaddafi have both such utterly worthless causes that they try to cover themselves with the ideals of those whom they have hated and persecuted for years.

Because Gaddafi has been harassing America with acts of what is now called terrorism (vastly different from the old, a meaning change as vast as that with the word 'gay'), Reagan decided that the American forces would strike a blow direct at Libya.

True to the principle that you mustn't hit an international Statesman though it's ok to kill his baby daughter provided she can come into the status of unarmed civilian, Reagan and his apologists cover up their attacks on Libya by referring in Anarchist terms to 'State Terrorism' – yet previously they had been calling all terrorists even nationalists and Marxists 'anarchists' Reagan even resorted to using the word of a great German-American John Most – the 'helpless giant'. How long must the helpless giant be subjected to assaults and harassment before rising up and striking the oppressor, asked Most, referring to the proletariat subject to State terrorism. Precisely the same is now being asked by Reagan, but the 'helpless giant' is now the US of A, home of the grave and the fee, and staunch defender of capitalism and State terroism!

Gaddafi says it's his religious duty to 'export revolution'. Revolution? In Libya? About the sickest joke there is. Gaddafi's exported 'revolution' on oil money consists of forming ringers for revolutionary groups, and using established resistance names for nationalistic ends.

TV REVIEW: EDDIE & MAXIE

What has British trade unionism in common with Spanish anarcho-syndicalism? Both are hated by international State Communism and local CP's have tried to get their hands on both – denouncing one as 'reformist' and the other as 'criminal'. When they can't seize they destroy. CP pressure on the Spanish government keeps the CNT-AIT from receiving back what was sequestrated from it; the Bank of Hungary finances Eddie Shah, a minor space salesman, to build up a new press empire in which unionism plays no part and which paves the way for sequestrations of its own.

In ITV's *The Late Clive James Show* (April 6), Shah appeared with Max Hastings, new 'intellectual' editor of the *Daily Telegraph*, as one half of what seemed like a comedy team ("That's rubbish," retorted Eddie to Maxie. "What's rubbish, what are you talking about," asked Maxie? Quick as a flash came the retort, 'Everything, that's what. It's all absolute rubbish.' As my father used to say, that's the sort of crosstalk that brought about the decline and fall of the Holborn Empire—Music Hall–).

But the gem came with military journalist turned editor Max Hastings, after saying how he saw nothing wrong with this country as it is – in tones of 'what a wonderful job Mrs Thatcher is doing' – going on to say, in cultured tones, 'I'm like most soldiers, an instinctive anarchist'. . . oh, hum, Maxie, must remember that one next time you're saying what ratbags we are. . .

ROON 'N ABOOT

WE BLAME THE MEDIA

Calling all anarchists/subversives/disgruntled elements etc. . .

A SECRET ANARCHIST PICNIC/DEMO against the media somewhere in London is being organised for royal wedding day (July 23rd), listen in to grapevine for the details.

Airstrip One Liberation Army

Box 19, 17 Chatham St Reading.

ANARCHIST GET-TOGETHER

All Sunday & Monday 18/19th May
33 Guildford Street, Luton'
Price £3.00: Discussions/films/social/vegan meals inclusive and accomodation available. (Limited space means limited numbers so advance enquiries welcome) Send a Stamped Addressed Envelope for return tickets/more information to:
Box A, 33 Guildford Street, Luton Beds.'

NEW PUBLICATIONS

Libertarian Communism (Isaac Puente); *Program of Anarcho-Syndicalism* (Maximoff); and *Methods of Anarcho-Syndicalism* (Rocker). Available c/o ASP, BM Hurricane, London WC1.

LATE NEWS FROM GREECE

2,000 Anarchists from all over Greece descended on the town of Patra last weekend (April 18-20) and 800 participated in what must have been the biggest Anarchist conference to be held in Athens in recent times.

The positive mood expressed throughout the Conference, however was soon shattered. Riot police were waiting for 50 Anarchists at an Athens railway station as they returned home by train on April 21st. In what can only be described as cold-blooded terrorism, the train was surrounded on arrival, the Anarchists were dragged out of the train and brutally beaten with police batons and fists. Shocked passers-by looked on disbelievingly as the police dragged the 50 comrades off to jail.

43 Anarchists (including a young Dutch Anarchist) were then brought before a District Attorney and charged with breach of the peace, criminal damage, theft and other minor charges. One woman was also charged with possessing an offensive weapon.

The trial against the 50 Anarchists was postponed until May 7th when police witnesses failed to attend a Court hearing on April 22nd. (Each police witness was immediately fined 10,000 drachmas!)

All 50 have now been released but some have clearly been badly tortured. Two were beaten in the face with clubs and are in a serious condition with eye injuries. A demonstration called by the Anarchists, held in Exarchia Square, to protest about police torture ended in a mini-riot with police being chased by petrol-bombs.

NOTE TO READERS

Black Flag will be missing an issue due to members being overseas at Anarchist conferences in Chicago and Melbourne. Reports of these events will hopefully appear in the following issues. The next issue will come out on 26th May 1986.

DON'T FORGET THE FALKLANDS

Continued from front page. . .

as much consensus as possible amongst the populace.

If anyone didn't understand why the Falklands war happened, or didn't know if it was wrong or right to invade the islands, then all doubts disappeared after hearing the bombardment of propaganda designed to glorify nationalist feeelings in defence of 'the nation'. At this point, the propaganda had achieved its desired effect and each victory or 'enemy' ship sunk was greeted with joy, like when a goal is just scored during a football match.

Each mutilated life, each death, each defeat by the 'enemy' was greeted with approval by the majority of the population. They had been devoured and alienated against their wishes by official propaganda and forced to accept silently or complacently the destruction and death not only of the 'enemy', but also of their own compatriots.

Enzo (Rosario).



No.154

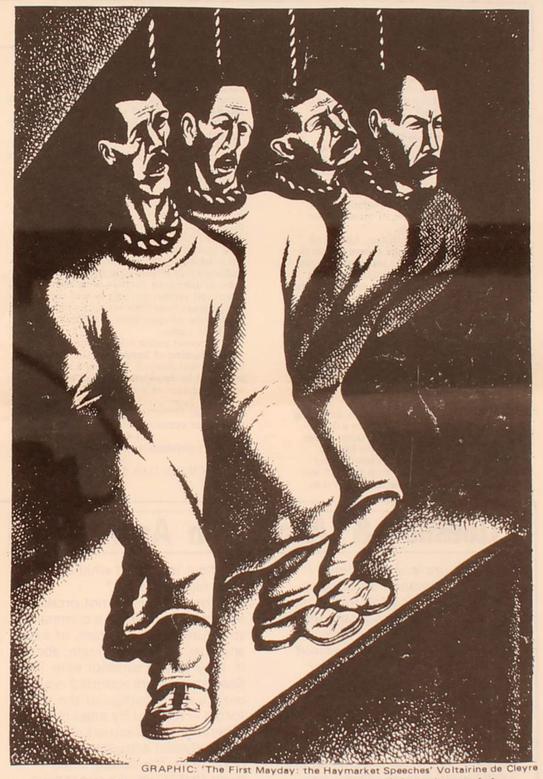
BLACK FLAG

30p

THE ANARCHIST FORTNIGHTLY

28-4-86

REMEMBER MAY DAY !



GRAPHIC: 'The First Mayday: the Haymarket Speeches' Voltairine de Cleyre

The 1st of May is the 100th anniversary of May Day – International Workers Day. On the 1st of May one hundred years ago the North American labour movement called a general strike to achieve the 8 hour day. In all industrial centres massive strikes took place. In Chicago, anarchists were prominent amongst those involved in this movement. On the 3rd of May 1986 four workers were killed during a brutal police attack on the picket-line outside the MacCormick Harvester factory which was on strike.

After this the editor of the anarchist Workers Paper *called a protest meeting of the workers movement in Chicago, at Haymarket on the evening of May the 4th. During the assembly a bomb was thrown by an agent provocateur into the special police unit which was attacking the meeting: seven police and a lot of workers were killed. The authorities used this incident as an excuse to smash the organised workers movement. Eight of the most prominent labour organisers, including seven anarchists, were blamed for the incident. They were found guilty after a year-long trial which failed to show that any of the accused had anything to do with the incident. Four were hanged, one committed suicide and three were pardoned after seven years in jail and declared victims of government injustice.*

In the USA the result of all this was the destruction of the unions and the campaign for the 8 hour day. The 2nd International decided to declare the 1st of May as International Workers Day to remember this tragic event of the working class.

Today, the struggle is the same as one hundred years ago; the bosses are still attacking the labour movement (eg. the miners strike, printworkers strike) but the reformist trade unions neither can or will fightback effectively. History shows that no government or political party has anything to offer the working class except oppression and exploitation. The only way way to successfully fightback is to use direct action organised and initiated by workers on the shop-floor (strikes, boycotts, occupations, sabotage) and by working class people in the community in general.

The emancipation of the workers is the task of the workers (slogan of the 1st International). In this tradition, anarcho-syndicalists stand for direct action, anti-parliamentarianism, anti-militarism, workers self-management (communal ownership and individual liberty), internationalism, mutual aid and free association.

Workers of the world unite, we have nothing to lose but our chains. We don't just want bread, we want the whole fucking bakery.

Long live the International.

REAGAN'S CRISIS

Four days prior to Libya being bombed by US jets, nuclear missiles in several parts of Europe were mobilised in readiness of a possible (but unlikely) Soviet response to the planned attack. Both Cruise and Pershing missiles were involved.

In Britain four Cruise missiles were taken out of the Greenham Common base and sent on exercises. At approximately the same time Pershing missiles were also deployed in West Germany and at the Comiso base in Sicily. In each case the target was more likely to be the Soviet Union but could easily have been Libya too.

The fact that four missiles were simultaneously deployed from Greenham Common alone indicates that it was no mere 'exercise': this was the first occasion that four had been mobilised at the same time from any one base in Europe. It is unlikely that tney were prepared tor attack partly because of the 'red alert' status sent to all military bases in the UK prior to (and after) the Tripoli raids, but also because of US administration anticipation of how the Soviets might react. The USSR however, was hardly likely to risk nuclear war over an attack on a country headed by what they also perceive to be a madman and a danger equivalent in tone, although not in might, to Reagan himself.

In retrospect, and in comparison with other conflicts in over the last 30 years or so, the 'Libyan crisis', as the media have dubbed it, has proven, so far, to be a limited affair, although the consequences of the conflict will undoubtedly escalate and have far-reaching effects in months to come.

While as wars and conflicts go there were few casualties, the reaction throughout Europe was by no means proportionate. The fear that paralysed everyone as they woke up to hear the news about the raid was that the psychopath in the White House was at last testing his own theory, his belief in 'divine providence', for the build up to the 'pre-destined' Armageddon in the Middle East, the 'Holy War' between the 'forces of darkness' when 'Christian and Jew will be pitted against Communist and Moslem'.

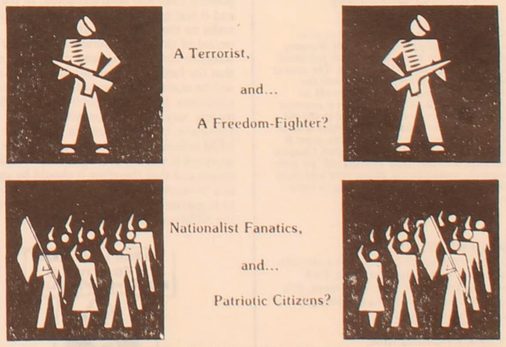
For once, as the shock waves were only beginning to settle, even much of the mainstream media were jolted temporarily into taking a high critical stance. More remarkable, the language and rhetoric of anarchism, in its reference to 'state terrorism' and 'state-sponsored terrorism', was exploited and used to the full by the press, partisan to both sides of the conflict, to condemn the actions (and counter-reactions) of the other side. From the non-partisan point of view the conflict was a consequence of the rhetoric and practice of two warring state-terrorist factions, one a force of might that has sponsored conflicts small and great as part of its global strategy, the other a force that made up on its lack of resources by sponsoring and practising guerrilla-style terrorism, sensational in style, but much smaller in scale to the terrorism of its main opponent.

As more than one commentator has stated in the national press, the conflict also reflected the differing values placed on human lives, depending not on 'whose side you were on' but on your understanding of the concept of terrorism itself. Once you've defined your enemy as a 'terrorist' you can then proceed to use whatever degree of force, or type of outrage necessary 'in defence' and 'in pre-emption' of actual and anticipated attacks. Thus a Libyan (ie Arab/'Commie') life is as valueless to the US Administration and its protagonists as any life of anyone from a Non-Capitalist/non-Westernised background, or indeed the life of anyone who of themselves has no inherent capital or political value. So we have both a racist and a class reasoning behind this perception.

Continued on back page. . .

Can You Recognize A TERRORIST?

Do You Know The Difference Between:



GREECE

Police Ambush Anarchists

SEE BACK PAGE

BLACK FLAG – BLACK CROSS
BM HURRICANE, LONDON
WC1N 3XX
Published, typeset and layout
BLACK FLAG COLLECTIVE
Printed by Aldgate Press
SUBSCRIPTION RATES
12 months. £12 inland
£15 surface, £19 Air.
6 months: £6.50 inland
£8 surface, £10 Air.
PRISONERS: Free on request.
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GIRO ACCOUNT No. ANARCHIST
BLACK CROSS: 51 172 0009.

For the release of all political prisoners, the relief of class war victims and the overthrow of tyranny everywhere. Smash the State! Anarchy is freedom.

HOME NEWS

Addenbrook Workers - Still on Strike

For almost 17 months, health workers at Addenbrookes Hospital in Cambridge have been on strike against privatisation of the cleaning service. Accepting the OCS privatisation deal would have meant the loss of 150 jobs, a 50% wage cut, loss of holiday and sick pay abolished. The strikers have picketed the hospital ever since.

The $725,000 cleaning contract was won by OCS who have a record of employing dubious scabs. Since OCS started, one cleaner was fined for selling vodka to patients, four for being well under employment age and hygiene and patient care seriously worsened. Surgeons have refused to work in filthy operating theatres, a renal unit has been closed down for the same reasons. So bad were the complaints that the Health Authority chairperson has tried to have the public watchdog banned from the hospital.

In the early days of the dispute, the General Secretaries of both NUPE and COHSE openly supported the strike. Now they are ignored as an embarrassment. Officials from both unions have sought to 'stitch up' deals at extraordinary branch meetings held at short notice. A picket of the NUPE National Executive meeting in London was arranged to show support for the Addenbrookes strike against possible moves to ditch it.

The determination of the Addenbrookes cleaners not to return to any job at any price, despite official union pressure, is a model of resistance for all health workers currently under attack. The cleaners at Barking and Scarsdale have found out to their cost, the penalty of accepting – finally – privatised deals: heavy cuts in jobs, pay, hours and sickness/holiday benefits.

Support the Addenbrookes Strike! For Rank and File Control! Against Official Deals! The Health Service Belongs to Us, Workers and Users – Not to the State or to the Profiteers Waiting in the Wings! Fight Back!

Please send money to: Sylvia Burton, 31 Thorleye Road, Cambridge. Phone 0223 241742. Cheques to: 'NUPE/COHSE Strike Fund'.
Above written by Cambridge DAM

Demo Day in London

12midday: Mass Picket of the American Embassy against the air raid on Libya. Chants, slogans, banners songs and CND-approved resistance – 'Yanks go home' etc. It got interesting when everyone moved up to Oxford Street, o n the way to a Hyde Park rally. Instead everyone decided to sit down in the road and Oxford Street was blocked off for several hours. Mainly CNDers just left when the cops asked them to. The great majority of demonstrators stayed right where they were – it started getting lively, cops pushing and shoving and getting rubbish, paint and bottles thrown at them. (The riot police and horses kept out of sight but were present at the time). At one point someone got on the roof of Self-ridges and lowered the American flag with clapping and cheering of the demonstrators. They hung up a banner – *it only lasted a few minutes.* The police did not arrest many demonstrators that were obstructing – they just were roughed up a bit and dumped nearby.

The first London Transport bus trying to get through was driven by a cop and got several objects thrown at it. Apparently a window got smashed. Initially the resistance against the snatch squads charging through the crowd was strong – but dwindled too quickly. There was also an anti-apartheid demonstration ending at South Africa House to start the non-stop picket till Mandela's release. There were a few incidents with a small group of fascists. There was a National Front demonstration too in Southwark towards central London. A counter-demo set off to meet them but no details are known. (It was St. Georges Day). Apparently at the same time West Ham were playing in London too, so the cops were pretty over-stretched that Saturday.

ELSEWHERE IN EUROPE

The 19th of April was the day that anti-American demonstration were held all over Europe. Through the official channels we got to hear of Rome, Stockholm, Frankfurt. Violent clashes with police happened in Berlin and Bonn in West Germany.

Wapping News

BOYCOTT
THE Sun NEWS OF THE WORLD
THE TIMES
THE SUNDAY TIMES

OLD TECHNOLOGY

An AUEW engineer who spent 18 months compiling a 102 page report on the Wapping plant machinery has had the report published by the AUEW Fleet Street branch. The presses were bought 15 years ago and stored; the strapper which wraps bundles is so old its designers PAKSEAL don't market it anymore (a newer smaller model is installed in the old *SUN* newspaper building). Thus there is nowt that cannot easily be handled by the print & engineering unions. The Kinning Park Glasgow machines are more than 30 years old and were originally owned by the *Mirror* who sold them cheap in the belief they were going to India – in reality a Murdoch swindle.

SCAB-BUSTERS

On the evening of 28th March a successful attack was carried out on a TNT lorry parked at the Hornsey Depot. It's windows were smashed and anti-scab graffitti was sprayed.

'STOP WAPPING SCABS'
Have a smashing time,
Scab Busters

Miners News

The National Coal Board are trying to force through a no-strike clause in current pay negotiations under discussion with the National Union of Mineworkers. The NUM have argued that the clause is illegal and have insisted that the pay negotiations go ahead without reference to it.

The clause is actually about giving up pension rights in the future should workers take strike action. At the end of the 1984 /'85 miners strike the NCB tried to stop all those who had been on strike from receiving their entitlement to a pension, with the 'argument' that payments to the pension fund had been disrupted. In the end it was agreed that the strikers would make up the lost contributions over a period of time. Now, however, the NCB wants to change things and make certain that for future disputes no such provisions will be made for the spreading out of contributions. In other words if the Board has its way, any strike action will mean the automatic loss of all pension rights. The NUM believes that if this arrangement is accepted it will act as a deterrent to strike action and that therefore it should be seen as a 'no-strike clause'. The NCB has refused to negotiate further on the pay claim until the NUM accept the clause.



ALF Under Attack

In response to the direct action campaign for animal rights over the last few years, the British State has introduced a special anti-animal rights police unit based at Scotland Yard and encouraged the regional Chief Constables to spend more money on surveillance and intelligence work on animal rights sympathisers.

Over the last twelve months many animal rights campaigners have been dragged through the courts and imprisoned or received community service.

The level of sentencing has risen with two year prison sentences for first offences and, for the first time, sentences of three or four years dealt out to activists.

In a series of raids in London, Liverpool and Sheffield, police arrested eleven people in connection with a campaign initiated after the fur trader Michael Edelson obtained a Court injunction which made it a civil offence for the Fur Action Group to collect petitions and hand out leaflets outside stores.

The campaign involved breaking windows of stores, progressing to miniature timed incendiary devices. These when placed under a mattress in a department store would ignite at midnight when there was no-one inside the store and result in a smouldering mattress, which would trigger smoke detectors and so set off the sprinkler system. This would cause extensive water damage to the stock in the store, the aim being to make it an economic liability for a department store to engage a furrier in store. These devices did not explode or shower blazing material around, they merely caused a very small but very hot flame to burn for a 15 second period, enough to cause the mattress to begin to smoulder. The charges against the people involved (Conspiring to cause criminal damage) shows that the police themselves do accept that the campaign was one of economic sabotage and designed not to endanger or frighten anyone, the damage was not fire damage but water damage.

The police opposed bail in almost all cases against the accused, however four of the accused have now received bail, although under strict conditions. The arrests are a serious attempt by the police to weaken the ALF structure, the accused include press officers from London and the North resulting in the office being out of operation for five days.

It is a tried and tested tactic of the State, used against almost all its opponents who are not subdued by the promise of non-existant parliamentary reform to attempt to portray them as dangerous fanatics, with criminal intent and further attempt to split the active campaigners from their support within the broad base of opposition, the classic 'Divide and Rule' tactic.

The recent police action has meant that the production of Supporters Group Newsletter 18 was delayed. However a mini newsletter will be despatched as soon as possible with an update on the situation regarding the ALF, the Supporter's Group and the prisoners. For details of the prison numbers and visiting rota please contact David Hughes on 051 425 4441.

All other enquiries to the SG office at:

ALF, BCM Box 1160, London WC1N 3XX England.

Question & Answer On Anarchism

Q: As a professional soldier I found the pamphlet on Citizens Militias interesting and sound enough in some ways, but how can Anarchists begin to think of an Army without command, even without officers to orchestrate actions? Even the Spanish Anarchists found in practice they had to have officers. Once you have the power structure of an Army, won't you be back into the military State – and having abolished the parliamentary State, be stuck with an old-fashioned generalissimo? And could you run an air force without officers?

A: A militia is by definition an army without a command structure. They may sound impratical but one is talking of a citizens militia of a free society, but they are effective in many unfree societies, where some overriding national concern makes the people over look where their class interests lie, and thus enables the Government to allay its fears over giving the people arms, the last thing any oppressive class can afford to do. 'The people armed' have been the backbone of any working class revolution, but also, where populism has thrived, have been the backgone of nationalistic forces such as in South Africa, Israel, Yugoslavia, to some extent in China and to a different extent in Ulster. Why should it be thought impractical for them to defend their real interests, but practical for them to defend what are not their real interests. *

Army officers do not orchestrate actions but form a command structure. Up to the rank of sergeant, they may co-ordinate, above it, they form a superior elite. The Spanish workers accepted reluctantly a militarisation of the armed forces – resisted by anarchists generally, but accepted after a split between activists and collaborationists, the excuse being given that it was the concession needed for French and Russian support (which never came anyway).

An officered army *will* lead to a military dictatorship, or at the very least, to rule by the elite. That is why Anarchists oppose it (and weakening on this position led to disaster in Spain).

Corporals and sergeants can be elected – though even these have proved sometimes in the Resistance to be unnecessary – but more than this means a strengthening of command not a strengthening of actual efficiency.

Admittedly certain technical skills now carry officer rank (e.g. air pilots) but these are not officers in the command sense, and are given the status to vie on equal terms with them in the present armed forces. The 'skills' involved in discipling and 'handling' people are ones we can well do without.

* A question for another time!

Anarchist Black Cross

CORRESPONDENCE WANTED

Terry Dean, on remand in Brixton jail for charges arising out of the September riots in Brixton has asked for correspondence.

When you write please enclose a stamp if possible so he can reply.
T.J. Dean B77879
HM Prison,
Jebb Avenue, Brixton London SW2

INTERNATIONAL

News from Holland

MORE FASCIST THUGGERY AGAINST SQUATTERS IN AMSTERDAM

Following the murder of Hans Kok in a cell after a police eviction, gangs of right-wing 'squat-bashers' have made several attacks. This has happened before, in 1982 there was a spate of attacks by such thugs (known as 'knoploeg', they also attack blacks and punks) culminating in the 'Lucky Luyk' seige, when thousands of squatters seized the streets, and forced a well armed gang out of a house they had evicted.

One recent attack, 'The fight in 1st Jan Steenstraat' exposed what goes on when it was learned that a squatters home was brutally attacked by high-up members of the Neo Fascist 'Centrum Partig', and the attack was directed by none other than the top secretary of the Social Affairs Ministry (the Dept. of Dole Cuts). This came to light when the police arrested the whole gang, but quickly released them.

On the 2nd March there was another terror attack, when a flat was resquatted after an illegal eviction. This time an entire American Football Team, the RAMS(sic) arrived in full gear. The squatters tried to surrender, the flat wasn't even barricaded, but they were very badly beaten, even after the police arrived. For instance, one old friend and comrade spent two weeks in hospital with multiple factures of legs and arms, lacerations of the face and head, etc. The police are trying to drop charges against the paid thugs. The flat was re-squatted with 150 people, well barricaded and stays squatted.

Frontline Info

WOENSDRECHT – DIRECT ACTION

The USAF Airbase in Woensdrecht is being prepared to receive 48 cruise missiles, despite the opposition of the vast majority of the Dutch people. On 3rd March there was another blockade (first Sunday of each month) which was attacked by police with dogs, but reformed later. Two people were arrested. That night thirty aircraft landing lights were smashed with no arrests.

Frontline Info

EXTRADITIONS

Two Irish people, Gerard Kelly and Brendan McFarlane are still being held in Holland, while appeals on their extradition to Britain (or not) are heard. Both were part of the 'Great Escape' of 36 nationalist prisoners from the Maze Prison on 25.9.83. Like most of the IRA prisoners they face a life in prison after being convicted by non-jury trials, nearly always on the basis of 'confessions'. Nearly everyone 'confesses' sooner or later. In the case of these two even if the extraditions finally fail, they face charges connecting them with a huge haul of arms and ammunition in Amsterdam

Frontline Info

RED REVOLUTIONARY FRONT

In the week 23.2 to 6.3.86 a group calling themselves the RRF firebombed the offices of the Dutch Christian Employers Union, causing $300,000 damage. They claimed they did it in response to the ever present and ongoing structural and physical violence stemming from international modern feudalism!

Frontline Info

FASCIST ATTACK

On the night of 4th March an 'autonomous' house for helping newly released prisoners was burnt out, after the 5th firebomb attack. The attacks have been traced (by squatters) to a fascist skinhead group, responsible also for attacking a squat in 1982 and the killing of a 15 year old in 1983 because he was black. But the police have made no arrests.

Frontline Info

ANTI-FASCIST ATTACK

On the 29th March 1986 a group of 200+ anti-fascists disrupted and stopped a fascist party's conference. The idea was, after smashing the windows, to force the fascists out, by throwing in tear gas and smoke bombs. But due to the smoke bombs (it seems) a fire broke out inside the hotel, and within two minutes the whole place was in flames! Two members of the fascist 'Centrum Party' were seriously injured, and from our side the police arrested 72 people. All refused to give their names, and nearly all were released the next day.

The Conference was between the two fascist parties (C.P. and C.D.) about uniting prior to the May elections, so it was important. The idea was to heal one of the splits in the far-right. There are actually 5 neo-fascist parties standing for the Parliamentary elections, and they already won 5 seats in the Council elections in March. The C.D., led by Jan Maat, wants 'democratic fascism' whereby racist attacks etc. aren't linked directly to the Party. Whereas the C.P. led by Vierling is hardline, with its own 'bodyguards' for leaders, etc.

We are happy to report that the attempt to unite these scum literally went up in flames!

Frontline Info

Letter from Greece

Dear Comrades,

As I've already written to you, Mr George Schultz's visit to Athens has provoked a lot of action in Greece, expecially in the Anarchist milieu. On Wednesday March 26th, a demonstration organised by Anarchists, took place outside the university of Athens central building. As the comrades started marching towards the US embassy in Athens, police attacked them using battons and lots of tear gas. Street fighting went on till late at night all round nearby streets and Exachia Square. Later, at about 2400 hours petrol bombs were thrown against American owned cars and banks. Eighteen people were arrested and held in custody.

Next day March 27th, Anarchist comrades in Salonica, occupied the building of the Industrial Studies School, in solidarity with the eighteen arrested, one of them, seriously wounded had been transported to the hospital. More petrol bombs were thrown against police vans and banks.

On March 28, all prisoners were set free by the instruction judge – fourteen on a 30,000 ds. bail. At about 1900 hours the comrades in Salonica left the occupied school. Late at night petrol bombs were thrown against police vans in Exarchia square. Two dynamite sticks were thrown as well, but they didn't explode.

On March 31, a policeman shot at an eighteen year old comrade seriously injuring him and saying that he was a junkie. Petrol bombs were thrown at the police and bank targets.

On April 1st, a bomb destroyed a police van outside Pasok (the governing party) headquarters and another one burnt down the Bank of Attica building in Patission Avenue in the centre of Athens. Fifty-two people were arrested and they are going to be tried on serious charges. That's all for the present.

Love and Anarchy!
B. from Athens.

More Dutch News

Five hundred people marched on the main police station in Amsterdam and the town hall in a protest against the cover-up and secrecy surrounding the death of Hans Kok a squatter, the Turkish worker Takhrifa and the people before them who have died in police cells.

A group organised for the liberation of gas-supplies did some direct action in protest against cut-offs. Pretending they were Meter-readers they entered the houses of local heads of Dept.s of Energy, Finances and Mayoress in Utrecht. They took away the gas-meters. The day ended with a demo to the Energy Board offices & streettheatre. Gas prices are always rising and expensive. Squatters and others have formed energy committees with 'surgeries' for practical help against intimidation and disconnection as it always minor users and never big time industries etc. that get cut off. Hypothermia is murder!

The Minister for Social Security, L. Voogd announced in the Dutch Parliament that in future people on the dole will have to prove they are *not* working while signing on. . . At the same time a big empty house he owns was squatted by six women. . . soon after this Minister, some of his family and several well known fascists smashed their way in at 1am. Some 25 thugs in all armed with sticks, knives and a pistol. As two cops were passing-by and saw all this they arrested 9 of the thugs and called up for more police. Those charged with the assault and destruction were the owner, a member of the local Council and bodyguard of a Centre Party fascist, amongst others. . .The house was resquatted and besides the scandal in the media, Voogd may lose his job if found guilty/sentenced. Another Minister apparently not involved in property speculation/extortion and thuggery had a heart attack and died at about the same time.


On their way to the hotel where the fascists are meeting.

Wackersdorf

Eighty thousand people demonstrated against the building of a nuclear reprocessing plant in Wackersdorf.

Before the demonstration 280 people were arrested during the eviction of their protest camp. Soon violent attacks by the police started. One demonstrator died. He is the second person to die in the ongoing protests in Wackersdorf. The police said he died of an asthma attack. The demonstrators say it was brought on because the water in the water-cannon was mixed with CS Gas!!

The protestors get a lot of support from people and farmers in the area when their camps are being evicted – the local people that are well known are well known for their solidarity with the protest get constantly harassed and intimidated by the police, (including having for example a police-helicopter hanging over the house for ten minutes etc.)

The plant was intended to be in Wendland (N. Germany), but the resistance there, halted the plans and made them 'politically unrewarding'.

Green Nazis?

Hitler's godson Wolf Hess says his old dad is a sympathiser of the Green Party. Rudolf Hess, 92, has 'strong views' on pollution and the environment. 'He's a Green with common sense,' he says. What's the betting he thinks 'violence leads to violence' too? Formerly known in Nazi circles as 'Frau Hitler' and now, in Bundestag circles as 'West Germany's only political prisoner' runaway Rudolf may (who knows) be voting for Danny the (no-longer-quite-so) Red/Daniel Cohn-Bendit seen in Paris in as the leader of the student riots.



News From Italy

The 'via dei Campani' anarchist collective has been working since 1980 on a long term project to constitute social centres in the city. The CDA (Anarchist Documentation Centre) is part of this project. The activities of the CDA consist on one hand of collecting every kind of material (newspapers, documents, books, posters etc.) produced by anarchists in particular and by the whole revolutionary movement in general; on the other hand it tried to promote analysis and discussions on various topics, with the help of its archives and library (is made up of more than 2,000 books), as well as through the publication or monographical booklets. The CDA also offers rooms in which to organise debates, showings, film shows etc.

In addition to this, the 'Anomalia' bookshop will soon open and function also as a mail order house.

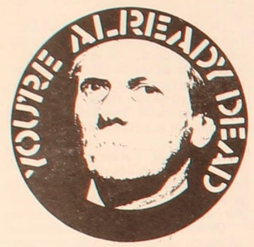
Contact: Centre di Documentazione Anarchica, Via del Campani, 89-00185 Roma (1) Italy.

Donations Wanted

Burnley DAM-IWA group have just bought an offset litho (printing machine) and are asking for donations towards the cost.

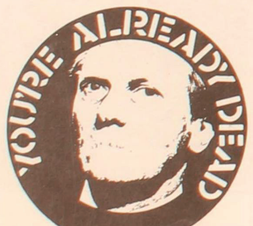
Donations should be sent to:
Burnley DAM-IWA
c/o 5 Hollins Hill, Burnley Lancs.

IN WHICH CRASS VOLUNTARILY











When, in 1976, punk first spewed itself across the nation's headlines with the message 'do it yourself', we, who in various ways and for many years had been doing just that, naively believed that Messrs. Rotten, Strummer etc. etc. meant it. At last we weren't alone.

The idea of becoming a band had never seriously occurred to us, it simply happened. Basically anyone was free to join in and rehearsals were rowdy affairs that invariably degraded into little more than drunken parties. Steve and Penny had been writing and playing together since early 77, but it wasn't until Summer of that year that we had begged, borrowed and stolen enough equipment to actually call ourselves a band. . . . CRASS.

Having finally managed to rehearse five songs, we set out on the road to fame and fortune armed with our instruments and huge amounts of booze to help us see it through. We did gigs and benefits, chaotic demonstrations of inadequacy and independence. We got turned off here, turned down there and banned from the now legendary Roxy Club. 'They said they only wanted well behaved boys, do they think guitars and microphones are just fucking toys?'

By now we had realised that our fellow punks, The Pistols, The Clash and all the other muso-puppets weren't doing it at all. They may like to think that they ripped off the majors, but it was Joe Public who'd been ripped. They helped no one but themselves, started another facile fashion, brought a new lease of life to London's trendy Kings Road and claimed they'd started a revolution. Same old story. We were on our own again.

Through the alchoholic haze we determined to make it our mission to create a real alternative to music-biz exploitation, we wanted to offer something that gave rather than took and, above all, we wanted to make it survive. Too many promises have been made from stages only to be forgotten on the streets.

Throughout the long, lonely winter of 77/78 we played regular gigs at The White Lion, Putney with the U.K. Subs. The audience consisted mostly of us when the Subs played and the Subs when we played. Sometimes it was disheartening, but usually it was fun. Charley Harper's indefatigable enthusiasm was always an inspiration when times got bleak, his absolute belief in punk as a peoples' music had more to do with revolution than McClaren and his cronies could ever have dreamt of. Through sheer tenacity we were exposing the punk charlatans for what they really were, a music-biz hype.

Our gigs remained wild and disorderly, we were still too scared to play without a belly full of booze and invariably we were in such a state that we'd realise half way through a song that each of us was playing a different one. For all the chaos it was immense fun, no one bitched about leather boots or moaned about milk in tea, no one wanted to know how anarchy and peace could be reconciled, no one bored our arses off with protracted monologues on Bakunin, who at that time we probably would have thought was a brand of vodka. Ideas were open, we were creating our own lives together. These were the glorious years before the free alternatives that we were creating became just another set of bigoted rules, before what we were defining as real punk became yet another squalid ghetto. We even played a Rock Against Racism gig, the only gig that we'd ever been paid for. When we told the man to keep the money for the cause, he informed us that 'this was the cause'. We never played for RAR again.

As the charlatans increasingly headed Stateside, to get a sniff of that which refreshed them best, we became hardened by the isolation. We determined to stop fucking about with booze and to start taking ourselves that much more seriously. We adopted black clothing as a protest against the narcissistic peacockery of fashion punks. We started incorporating film and video into our set. We went into production of handout sheets to explain our ideas and a newspaper, *International Anthem*. We designed the banner that hung behind us to the end, and we committed ourselves to see it through at least until the end of the then mythical 1984.

Later in the Summer of 78, Pete Stennet, owner of the much missed Small Wonder Records, heard one of our demo tapes and loved it. He wanted to put out a single but couldn't decide on which track, so we recorded all the songs we'd written and made the first ever multi-tracked 45. We named the album *The Feeding Of The Five Thousand* because 5000 was the minimum number that we could get pressed and some 4900 more than we thought we'd sell. *Feeding* is now only a few hundred short of going golden, though I don't suppose we'll hear too much about that in the music press.

So, with our entire stage set on record, wrapped in what was then highly innovative black and white, the music press were able to commence on the barrage of attack that has followed us throughout the years. They hated it and us and their loathing positively overflowed. It is not grandiose to claim that we have been one of the most influential bands in the history of British rock, true we have not greatly influenced music itself, but our effect on broader social issues has been enormous. From the start the media has attempted to ignore us and only when its hand has been forced by circumstances has it grudgingly given us credence. It's all fairly simple, if you don't play their game, that is commercial exploitation, they won't play yours. The music biz doesn't just buy its groups, it pays for the music press as well. The charlatans were spread thicker and deeper than we could ever have imagined.

Nonetheless, realising that we were a threat to its control, the first offers started coming in from the enemy. Mr. Big tried to buy us with cheap wine and an offer of £50000 if we'd join 'Pursey's Package'. He also informed us that he could 'market revolution' and that we'd never succeed without his help. It was the first of many offers that we refused, we never looked back and, incidentally, we didn't hear too much more of Jimmy Pursey.

When *Feeding* came out in the Spring of 79, the first track had been silent and named *The Sound Of Free Speech*. The pressing plant had decided that the track that had been there, *Asylum* was too blasphemous for their, and your, tastes. Such is the true face of censorship in the 'Free World'.

Eventually we found a pressing plant willing to deal with *Asylum*, so we re-recorded it along with *Shaved Women*, printed the covers at home, sold it for 45p, and totally broke ourselves.

On its release, the *Reality Asylum* single ran into immediate troubles. Complaints from the 'general public' led to police raids on shops throughout the country and a visit to us from Scotland Yard's vice-squad. After a pleasant afternoon sharing tea with our guardians of public morality, we were left with the threat of prosecution that hung over us for the next year. Eventually we received a note informing us that we were free, but that we'd better not try it again. The nature of our 'freedom' made doing it again inevitable and so the endless round-about of police harassment set itself in motion, it has continued to this day.

It was around this time that we did our one and only radio session for John Peel. From then on our growing reputation as foul mouthed yobs precluded us from being given airplay, although we did appear on several chat-shows which led to us being temporarily blacklisted by the BBC. Apparently, expressing dissident views on the Falklands is not acceptable to the listening public who jammed the BBC switchboard with complaints.

To offset claims in the press that we were nothing but leftist/rightist thugs, they never could quite make us out, we started to hang an anarchist banner alongside our own. At that time the circled A was rarely seen outside the confines of established and generally tedious, small-time anarchist literature. Within months the symbol was to be seen decorating leather jackets, badges and walls throughout the country, within a few years it spread worldwide. Rotten may have proclaimed himself an anarchist, but it was us who almost single-handedly created anarchy as a popular movement for millions of people.

At the same time, having discovered that CND did actually still exist, albeit in a downtrodden, self-effacing manner, we decided to promote its cause, something that at the time CND seemed to be incapable of doing for itself. From then on, despite screams of derision in the music press, we also displayed the peace symbol at gigs.

Our efforts on the road slowly brought CND back to life. We introduced it to the thousands of people who would become the backbone of its revival. A new and hitherto uninformed sector of society was being exposed to a form of radical thought that culminated in the great rallies, demos and actions that continue today.

The true effect of our work is not to be found within the confines of rock'n'roll, but in the radicalised minds of thousands of people throughout the world. From the Gates of Greenham to the Berlin Wall, from the Stop The City actions to underground gigs in Poland, our particular brand of anarcho-pacifism, now almost synonymous with punk, has made itself known.

Since early 77 we had been involved in maintaining a graffiti war throughout Central London. Our stencilled messages, anything from 'Fight War Not Wars' to 'Stuff Your Sexist Shit', were the first of their kind to appear in the UK and inspired a whole movement that, sadly, has now been eclipsed by hip-hop artists who have done little but confirm the insidious nature of American culture.

To celebrate our success with the spraycan, we decided to call our next album *Stations Of The Crass*, the cover of which was a photo of some of our work on one of London Underground's stations. *Stations* featured the first ever six-fold wrapper and came complete with a sew on patch that we printed at home.

By now, Pete of Small Wonder was beginning to tire of the kind of police attention that we were drawing to his shop, so we borrowed the money to release *Stations* ourselves. It sold so well that after only a very short time we were able to pay back the loan and get the covers folded by machine rather than doing them at home by hand.

Stations continued to sell and soon we were able to consider releasing material by other bands. Crass Records was created and we kicked off with a single from Zounds, the first of well over one hundred bands that we have introduced to the unsuspecting public.

In the Spring of 1980, having played several benefit gigs for the defence fund of the jailed anarchists, known paradoxically as 'Persons Unknown', we were asked by them on their release if we could contribute to the creation of an Anarchist Center. We recorded *Bloody Revolutions*, with Poison Girls *Persons Unknown* on the reverse side, and the center was opened on the proceeds. For over a year an unhappy liason existed between the old school anarchists of Persons Unknown and the anarcho-punks. Eventually the ideological pressure got too great and the center closed.

The relative ease with which we were able to raise money for the center demonstrated to us the enormous power that we had to generate not only ideas, but the wherewithall to make them possible. By now we were drawing large crowds to our gigs so we decided that the best use to which we could put the situation was to play nothing but benefits. Over the years we were able to create funds for a wide variety of different causes.

It now seemed time to launch a feminist attack. For some time we had been aware that we were being labelled as a bother band and that the feminist element within our work was largely ignored. We released *Penis Envy* and the music press, missing the point entirely, heralded it as having been made by 'the only feminists physically attractive enough to make you sure they're singing out of choice rather than revenge'. What do you do with these guys? The reaction from many Crass 'fans' expressed similar prejudices, but from an entirely different angle. They wanted to know why we'd only got 'birds singing'. The devil or the deep blue sea?

The final track on *Penis Envy* entitled *Our Wedding*, a satire on slush MOR romantic bullshit, was offered by 'Creative Recording And Sound Services' to Loving, a magazine specialising in the exploitation of teenage loneliness. Loving proudly offered it to their readers as 'a must for that happy day'. When the hoax was exposed Fleet Street rocked, while heads at Loving rolled.

The release of *Penis Envy* confirmed a suspicion that we had had for some time. After one week in the shops it entered the national charts at number fifteen, next week it wasn't to be found anywhere in the top one hundred. The same fate had befallen *Nagasaki Nightmare*, we knew that it just wasn't possible to be that high in the charts one week and nowhere to be found the next. It seemed obvious to us that if the major labels paid to get their records 'in' the charts, they'd pay to get ours 'out'. We knew that we were disliked by EMI, they'd sent out a circular to their A&R departments forbidding any contact with 'Crass personnel' and their HMV shops have not touched any of our material since they took exception to the poster on *Bloody Revolutions*. What other devious tricks were going on behind our backs?

For some time now we had been touring far and wide throughout the UK, bravely treading where no band had trod before. Village halls, scout huts, community centers, anywhere that was neither the rip-off clubs or the pampered university circuit. Hundreds of people would travel to join us in unlikely spots to celebrate our mutual sense of freedom. We shared our music, films, literature, conversation, food and tea. Wherever we went we were met by smiling faces, ready and willing to create an alternative to the drab greyness all around.

It was not always easy, there were always those who wanted to destroy what we had created. We tried to play the Stonehenge Festival but got beaten up by the bikers; we had gigs smashed up by the National Front and the SWP; we played host to the RUC in Belfast, sent the British Movement packing in Reading and got thrashed by the Red Brigade in London. There was a lot of trouble, but it never outweighed the joy.

Throughout 1981 we were recording *Christ The Album* which by the Summer of 82 was ready to release. This time, however, the trouble did outweigh the joy. 'Great Britain' had gone to war.

Insignificant events on an island called South Georgia, which no one had ever heard of, led to significant events on an island called the Falklands which no one had ever heard of. The first pin-prick had been placed in the anarcho-pacifist bubble, a pin-prick that would in the space of a few months tear the bubble to shreds. As young men died by the

BLOW THEIR OWN...

hundred, our songs, protests and marches, our leaflets, words and ideas suddenly seemed to be worthless. In reality we knew that what we had to offer had value, that what we believed in was worthwhile, but for the moment it all semed futile.

Thatcher wanted war to boost her party's flagging pre-election image. If she wanted war, she'd have it, along with anything else that took her fancy. Cruise, Pershing, PWR's, Unions, Dennis.

At risk of being seen as the 'traitors' that we are, through devious routes we rushed out an anti-Falklands War flexi and were instantly labelled 'traitors' by the music press. We also received a severe warning from the House of Commons to 'watch our step'. Protest against the War seemed to be virtually non-existent and criticism in the press was being supressed. When the issues had been abstract, the Peace Movement had been all too happy to shout 'No more war', now there was a war to shout about, the silence was painful.

However it wasn't until the war had ended and we released *How Does It Feel To Be The Mother Of A Thousand Dead* that the shit really hit the fan. After Thatcher had been asked in the House of Commons whether she had listened to the record, it was inevitable that she and her party would want to punish us. Tory MP Tim Eggar had the hapless task of fronting prosecution proceedings and right from the start couldn't put a foot right. The case crumbled completely when Eggar was exposed by us on live radio as a complete fool. The Tories backed down immediately after his miserable performance and even went to the trouble of circulating a note in which members of the Party were ordered to ignore all provocation from our quarter. Suddenly we started receiving letters of support from members of the 'Opposition'. Maybe we weren't on our own. Fall guys or what?

We found ourselves in a strange and frightening arena. We had wanted to make our views public, had wanted to share them with like minded people, but now those views were being analysed by those dark shadows who inhabited the corridors of power. Eggar had created a great deal of publicity for our cause and the press had lapped it up, especially those who, literally at gun point, had been prevented from gaining any real information on the war. It was as if we'd hooked a whale while fishing for minnows. We didn't know whether to let go of the rod, or keep pulling until we exhausted ourselves, which we knew, inevitably, we would.

The speed with which the Falklands War was played out and the devastation that Thatcher was creating both at home and abroad, forced us to respond far faster than we had ever needed to before. *Christ The Album* had taken so long to produce that some of the songs in it, songs that warned of the imminence of riots and war, had become almost redundant. Toxteth, Bristol, Brixton and the Falklands were ablaze by the time that we released. We felt embarrassed by our slowness, humbled by our inadequacy.

At the end of 82, aware that the 'movement' needed a morale booster, we organised the first squat gig for decades at the now defunct Zig Zag Club in London. Along with free food and copious supplies of ripped-off booze, we celebrated our independence once again, this time joined by twenty other bands the cream of what could truly be called 'real punk'. Together we supplied a twenty-four hour blast of energy which inspired similar actions throughout the world. We'd learnt the lesson. 'Do it yourself' has never seemed so real as it did that day at the Zig Zag.

In many respects the Zig Zag consolidated our thinking, the job was by no means over. So, deciding that we should hang onto the rod and fight the whale, we launched an all out attack on Thatcher and her allies. The run up to the 83 Elections had started, the 'Opposition' had all but collapsed. Labour had made the inevitable, revolting turn-about on its anti-nuclear stance and the Peace Movement was in tatters, muted by its own fears.

The album *Yes Sir I Will* was our first 'tactical response', it was an impassioned scream directed towards the wielders of power and those who passively accept them as an authority. The message in *Yes Sir* was loud and clear, 'There is no authority but yourself'.

As our political position became increasingly polarised, we felt it necessary to define our motives in a clearer fashion than perhaps we had done before. The what, where and why of our anger needed explaining, as did our idea of 'self'. We had often been accused of sloganeering, now was the time to come out into the open. Several members of the band produced *Acts Of Love*, fifty poems in lyrical settings, in an attempt to demonstrate that the source of our anger was love rather than hate and that our idea of self was not that of an egocentric social bigot, but of an internal sense of one's own being. The ambiguity of our attitudes was beginning to disturb us. Was it really possible to have a bloodless revolution? Were we being truly realistic? Were we being destroyed by our own paradoxes?

It was at this time that we sent the now infamous 'Thatchergate Tapes' to the world's press. The highly edited tape, which took the form of a telephone conversation between Reagan and Thatcher, had her admitting responsibility for the sinking of the Belgrano, an issue which at that time she had not been confronted with, and implying knowledge of the Invincible's decision to 'guinea-pig' the Sheffield, a fact that still has not come to light. So as to leave no stone unturned, we caused Reagan to threaten to 'nuke' Europe in defence of American heritage, a hypothesis which is proably not as wild as it seems.

The tape lay dormant for almost a year before surfacing in the State Department in Washington DC. The categorical denials that were issued in relationship to the tape and its contents acted as a clear indication that the methods that we had employed to discredit Thatcher and Reagan were in no way dissimilar to those of The State Department. Why else would they have taken our somewhat amateurish efforts at tape forgery so seriously? Inevitably, they waved the accusatory finger in the direction of the Kremlin. Shortly after that, several papers in America, and The Sunday Times in Britain, ran the story as proof of KGB 'foul-play'. It was the first time that the press had run any story that, albeit in a roundabout fashion, questioned Thatcher's integrity concerning the Belgrano. We were overcome with a mixture of fear and elation, should we or should we not expose the hoax?

Our indecision was resolved when a journalist from The Observer contacted us in relationship to 'a certain tape'. At first we denied knowledge, but eventually decided to admit responsibility. We had been meticulously careful in the production and distribution of the tape to ensure that no one knew about our involvement, how The Observer got hold of information that led to us is a complete mystery. It acted as a substantial warning, if walls did indeed have ears, how much more was known of our activities?

Since the graffiti days of 77 we had been involved in various forms of action, from spraying to wire cutting, sabotage and subterfuge. We had been concerned that if we went public on the tape all manner of other 'offences' might bubble to the surface. Now we had exposed ourselves to that risk and the telephone started to ring.

The world's media pounced on the story, thrilled that a 'bunch of punks' had made such idiots of The State Department, and 'by the way, what else had we done?' Throughout the years as a band we had never attracted such attention, the telephone rang incessantly, we travelled here and there to do interviews, all of a sudden we were 'media stars'. We were interviewed by the Russian press as American TV cameras recorded the event, we were live on American breakfast TV, we talked to radio stations from Essex to Tokyo, always giving the anarchist angle on every question. We had gained a form of political power, found a voice, were being treated with a slightly awed respect, but was that really what we wanted? Was that what we had set out to achieve all those years ago?

After seven years on the road we had become the very thing that we were attacking. We had found a platform for our ideas, but somewhere along the line had lost our insight. Where once we had been generous and outgoing, we had now become cynical and inward. Our activities had always been coloured with a lightness and humour, now we saw that we had been increasingly drawn towards darkness and an often ill-conceived militancy. We had become bitter where once we had been joyful, pessimistic where once optimism had been our cause. Throughout those seven years we had attracted almost constant direct and indirect State harassment, now, inevitably, they struck again.

1984 had arrived rather worse than Orwell had predicted. Unemployment, homelessness, poverty, hunger. The police state had become a reality, as the miners were going to discover. 'Accidental' death from Thatcher's private army of boys in blue had become an acceptable norm. The balance of a whole society was hanging on the apron strings of a vicious and uncaring despot. Far less important by far was our own fate. We were hauled into the courts to face an obscenity charge that almost broke us. 'We have ways of making you not talk'.



That Summer we played what was to be our last gig together, a riotous benefit for the South Wales miners. From the stage we vowed to continue working for the cause of freedom, yet, as we drove home, we all know that the particular path that we had been taking had been exhausted. We needed new ways in which to approach our objectives and, a few weeks after the gig, Hari Nana left the band to seek his.

We felt no compulsion to continue gigging. We were no longer convinced that by simply providing what had broadly become entertainment we were having any real effect. We'd made out point and if after seven years people hadn't taken it, it surely wasn't because we hadn't tried hard enough.

'There is no authority but yourself', we said that, but we'd lost ourselves and become CRASS. We are still involved in the often painful process of refinding that self, of seeing each other again, of healing ourselves from the self-inflicted wounds of 'public life'. In Lennon's words, 'the dream is over'.

The 'movement', from Class War to Christians For Peace, needs to regain the dignity that it has lost in the process of attempting to confront problems that appear to be created by others. We have all been guilty of defining the enemy, and indeed there are those who would obstruct the course of liberty, yet ultimately the enemy is to be found within. There is no them and us, there is only you and me.

We need to consolidate, reassess, reject what patently does not work and be prepared to adopt ideas and attitudes that might. We need to find the 'self' that can truly be the authority that it is. We need to look beyond the barbed-wire and the ranks of police for a vision of life which is of our choosing, not that which is dictated by cynics and despots. The exponent of Karate does not aim at the brick when wishing to break it, but at the space beyond. We would do well to learn from that example.

We have spent too much of our time, energy and spirit attempting to dispell the shadow of evil cast over us by the violence and terror of the nuclear age. That shadow has become a stain on our hearts. It is time to wash away that stain and to step out of the shadow into the light. We have become trapped in fear outside metaphorical Greenham Gates. 'Knock and ye shall enter. . . the kingdom of heaven is within you.'

We know enough of the sickness of the world, we should be careful not to add to it through our own physical and mental exhaustion and ill health. If we are ever to achieve our shared objectives we must each of us be strong enough to do so. We have all failed and we have all succeeded. This is no tail between the leg ending, but a proud, albeit painful and confused, beginning.

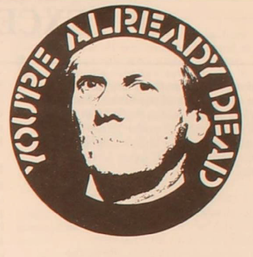
Love, peace and freedom,
what was CRASS, but now knows better.

Footnotes

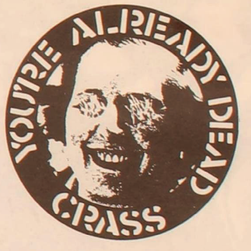
Although we no longer intend to tour as CRASS, we are continuing to work in the same fields whilst at the same time expanding into other areas. Since late Summer 84 we were involved in the recording of *10 Notes On A Summer's Day*, our last 'formal' release. We may well choose to continue recording as Crass should we consider that it makes sense to do so. Each of us is now involved in developing our own skills, from record production to landscape painting, film-making to healing. We will continue to release material by other bands on Crass Records and intend to become seriously involved in book publishing. As long as there is a job to do, we will attempt to do it. If at first. . . etc. etc.

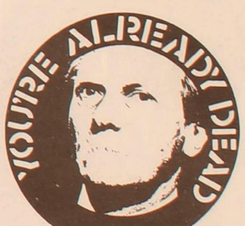
We would like to thank those many people, both individuals and groups, who shared our years on the road, especially Annie Anxiety, Poison Girls, Dirt and Flux Of Pink Indians with whom we toured extensively with Paul, Ian and the rest of the roadcrew from Tandy's Sound Systems. Our thanks also to Steve Hermann for his contribution to the formation of the band. For those who are awaiting replies to letters, we lost. We realise that we will never be able to write back to the thousands of letters that have accumulated, if yours was one of them, we're truly sorry.

Also over the last year Mick has been continuing to work in the field of film and video, and compiled all the work that he showed at our gigs in the video compilation *Christ the Movie*.











COMMENT

FRANCE
AN 'EXCEPTIONAL SITUATION'

In France, there is nothing new about the use of methods of repression. But it is only during the mid-seventies that the French state began to evoke 'exceptional situations', an event which occurred at the same period in most other western countries as well.

The 1959 constitution already allows the executive bodies considerable leeway to bypass the 'normal' legal framework in the event of a serious internal crisis. Article sixteen, for example, allows the President of the Republic to use exceptional powers if 'the institutions of the Republic are seriously in danger'. Article thirty-six provides for a 'state of seige' to be declared in the event of an 'imminent peril resulting from a foreign war or an armed insurrection'. The April 3, 1955 law allows a 'state of emergency' to be declared if there is an 'imminent danger resulting from serious breaches of public order, and gives considerably inhanced powers to the 'administrative authorities' i.e. the police.

NEW LAWS

In the aftermath of the May 1968 events two new laws to reinforce the arsenal of repressive measures were introduced: the 'anti-riot law' (17.7.70), which permits responsibility for collective activities to be attributed to individuals arrested during actions, and the January 3 1971 law, which grants the police increased powers concerning incarceration without laying charges and searching premises. A clampdown on drug trafficking was the pretext for the latter law.

It is in 1974, with the arrival of Poniatowski as Minister of the Interior and Lecanuet as Justice Minister that a new approach makes a spectacular appearance in the State's discourse: *security* (and its obligatory complement, *insecurity*.) In the space of a few months, the classical definitions of law, public order and public security disappear, and are replaced with viewpoints which are totally lacking in tangible legal content. Efforts are made to give substance to these opinions by multiplying opinon polls. The politics of repression achieves autonomy with respect to legal categories – and therefore parliamentary control – and from this point on is based uniquely on the 'feelings' of public opinion, relayed – or interpreted – by the media.

The fabrication of stereotyped villians (the 'mad killer', 'public enemy number one', the 'monster', the 'insidious terrorist') in which the press takes an active part (for example Gicquel's 'France is afraid') plays a role of nourishing the 'French citizen's feeling of insecurity' on a daily basis. At the same time, minor forms of 'deviance' or illegality are dramatised(vandalism, shoplifting etc.), and certain forms of political or social opposition are criminalised ('dangerous leftists', 'rioters' etc). Opposition itself is presented as a threat to public security.

EXCEPTIONAL MEASURES

Daily incidents are transformed into 'exceptional situations' by a security-oriented ideology calling more and more frequently for 'exceptional measures' to be implemented. The following quote is taken from the Journal of National Police Force: «*The most modern and exceptional activities to which the inhabitants of the larger cities are exposed – hostage takings, exploding bombs, assaults in the underground system etc, oblige those in charge of public security, and particularly the police forces, to intensify surveillance and to adopt their organisational methods to the present conditions of the war on crime ... and to invent new approaches*» The next quote is from the Minister of the Interior: «*Therefore the State should guarantee the liberty and security of its citizens, be it at the expense of slight inconveniences which cannot, by any stretch of the imagination, be interpreted as restrictions on liberties. These inconveniences should be considered normal duties in a society based on the acceptance of elementary civic responsibilities.*»

Beginning in 1974 a spectacular proliferation of laws aimed at permanently justifying exceptional situations takes place. These laws help reinforce the repressive potential of the executive bodies by allowing them to bypass the classical guarantees of 'institutional democracies'. Concretely, this results in an unprecedented increase in the scope of the powers of the police concerning arrests, on-the-spot searches, checking identity cards and searching domiciles. A reorganisation of the police forces, takes place (new units are created, police are deployed in the underground railway and 'community policing' is introduced), and traditional legal checks are limited (incarceration without laying charges and arbitrary detention are legitimised).

New crimes in a variety of areas are created (demonstrations, strikes, etc.); defence attorneys are obstructed (charges brought against attorneys and identity checks); the use of administrative procedures (expulsions) is renewed as well as the use of exceptional jurisdictions (the State Security Court and military tribunals); new methods of incarceration are introduced (High Security Detention); an increase in the application of the death penalty takes place, etc. etc. In practice, methods employed by the police and judges are usually several steps ahead of the Laws in place (when these Laws are not purely and simply ignored with the complicity of those in power). 'Security' becomes synonymous with dirty tricks.

EXCEPTIONAL SITUATIONS

In 1980, the 'Security and Liberty Law', the centrepiece of this operation, restructured the entire repressive apparatus according to the norms of 'exceptional situations'. If we are to believe the 700 page Peyrefitte dossier on which it is based, this Law implies a total reorganisation of society based on 'security-orientated' principles. According to Peyrefitte: '*Manifestations of violence are to be brought to a halt and the causes of violence itself are to be attacked at the roots.*' A considerable undertaking considering that amongst the 'roots of violence' the dossier cites: the mass media, alcoholism, drugs, genetic factors, the break-up of the nuclear family, the laziness of the young, consumer society, cultural conflicts, uncontrolled urbanisationpiece-work labour, as well as a lowering of the level of tolerance concerning inequality (because according to the authors of the dossier those who are the victims of inequality have become intolerable!) To say that this Law, and the project underlying it intend to permanently create exceptional situations is in effect an understatement. The profound changes outlined affect so many aspects of social life (from schools to urbanism, leisure, family relations etc.) that is possible, without exagerating, to speak of a revolution 'from above', in other words a preventive counter-revolution. . .

Henceforth, upon governmental or administrative directives, it is the agents of the executive themselves (cops, judges, screws) who strictly speaking make the Law. With the blessing/complicity of the judges, it is a cop turning a street corner who will pronounce and inflict the death penalty; it is the screw who will deprive prisoners of political works of literature with the complicity of the entire legal apparatus it is the judge, with the blessing of the courts – and therefore the Minister of Justice – who will arbitrarily imprison 50,000 people each year. . .

Governments and Prime Ministers come and go. 'Exceptional situations' are here to stay.

This article was translated from a longer article which appeared in *Derives No. 1*



Isn't life wonderful?
French riot cops show off the latest fashions.

LETTERS RECEIVED

Dear Black Flag,

We didn't get a questionaire, so I'd like to tell you what I think of it. I most like the news bits especially from overseas as it's always good to know Anarchists, and/or ordinary people can organise and fight back under regimes far more repressive than our own. It is a sad fact that Anarchy is not a more forceful entity in the 3rd world where there seems such small difference between left & right wing dictatorships.

I would like to see more personal politics in *Black Flag* ie. how the State represses our natural desires into perversions. The checking of individual growth and personality through conditioning. Besides a few bits and pieces on AIDS, homosexuality is seldom mentioned. Although it could be said this is adequately covered elsewhere there are a lot of 'socialists' and liberals making political gains for their own ends on this subject. Although I read an amazing magazine in *Boomtown Books* called *Lesbian and Gay Youth* which really confronts the issues of gay politics. On my part when people ask me if I'm homosexual I just tell them I'm sexual. I wish to give feelings of warmth and affection to all people regardless of sex, colour, class or religion. I'm not going deaf and I don't think I'll end up in damnation.

Aberdeen @narchist (Scotland).

Dear Black Flag,

We were sickened by your self-congratulatory report *What a Smashing Party (BF 147)* about how 2,000 people smashed up a luxury squat after a New Years Eve party.

Many thousands of us have spent much time, energy, effort and large chunks of our dole cheques doing up dilapidated, empty properties to make them habitable as homes or squatted community centres, so it sickens us to read your glorification of the destruction of such an amazing squat. All its benefits (including swimming pool, jacuzzi, etc.) could have been shared by many people instead of ritualistically destroyed. It surely doesn't take much imagination to think how a place like that COULD have been used. In fact, the article directly below the smashing one in *Black Flag* describes how a group of unemployed people in Manchester were struggling to set up a squatted community centre. . .

We could understand the destruction of the place if the squatters were being evicted – but it doesn't seem like they were. In any case smashing up big houses won't get rid of capitalism.

Finally, to the conclusion of your article – it is facile and meaningless to justify one act by reference to the fact that it is 'no worse' than another. You can justify abything with this principle – and authoritarians often do.

Ros & Andy (Exeter)

REPLY: Anyone who knows THE Bishop's Avenue – Hampstead's Millionaire's Row – – will appreciate that squatters couldn't last there longer than it takes a sheikh's butler to phone the local coppers. . . I even know of an elderly shabby millionaire on his way to see his made-it son's family there, and getting taken to the police station because he was 'walking suspiciously'. . . How could its benefits have been shared by anybody for more than a night? True, smashing up big houses won't get rid of capitalism – who thought it would? New Year's Eve is a time for fun *and this was funny, as it was New Year's Eve the opportunity was there to smash it up for a while before the alarm went off that it wasn't 'frisky young riche' but rowdy proles! The setting up of a centre in Manchester was* serious *– though it wouldn't get rid of capitalism either.*

FALKLANDS WAR

DONT FORGET THE FALKLANDS

Each country's foreign policy is little more than an extension of its domestic policy. War against another country is little more than a continuation of war against 'the enemy within'.

The Falklands war 'surprised' many people, especially those who though wars only broke out in far-away places. A lot of people undoubtedly misunderstood why wars occur. They think wars explode spontaneously and have nothing to do with the good intentions of governments. Such ideas are sustained by propaganda from both sides (Argentina and Britain in this case). Each side blames the other for starting the war and each side portrays itself as the victim of foreign agression.

People forget that a volatile climate had been prepared beforehand, including daily intrusion into our lives by psychological and physical violence. We don't have to go back very far into our history either to remember that towards the end of 1978 the same blood-thirsty army was preparing its population for the worst (with power-cuts in the city, the building of air-raid shelters, instructions on what to do in the event of an invasion etc.) when armed conflict with Chile over the Beagle Canal looked imminent.

Was that episode an accident? Was the Falklands war too? By 1982 the capitalist crisis in Argentina had reached its breaking point, with no short-term or long-term solutions forthcoming. The feeling of hunger will always be greater than the feeling of fear from State terrorist forces. The threat of social upheaval was becoming glaringly obvious. For how long could the threat of State violence be effective against growing industrial unrest?

Galtieri's government wasn't unaware of this situation and began to prepare for a few distractions. The upsurge of anger and unemployment brought with it an increase in repression. Demonstrations towards the end of March 1982, would nearly always end in bloody clashes and fatalities. The days when people passively accepted the misery they had been condemned to were over. Trade union leaders tried hard to silence their members' growing demand for social justice and were shocked to see workers slip out of their control.

In the face of probable social upheaval the government put into operation a plan it had been preparing for some time. They invaded the Falkland Islands, fully aware that they could count on latent nationalistic feelings. They even had the support of all the main political parties and trade union organisations.

The threat of war against Britain meant the postponement of all popular and industrial struggles. Such struggles now went 'against the national interest'. The war also gave the government time to stage an economic recovery.

The economic recovery never took place and we all know what happened in the end. . . As a result, the Falklands question will be debated again in the future, whenever it's necessary to divert and manipulate people's attention (by 'democratic' and dictatorial governments alike).



General Galtieri addressing a rally in Plaza de Mayo on 6 April 1982

Politicians will always defend private property and the exploitation of the many by the few. Sometimes it means food shortages, bad housing conditions, a longer working week and bad working conditions. Sometimes, in a more rapid and violent way, it will mean war. War over territory, or the plunder of territory, but always based on the exploitation of work.

The Falklands war was the continuation and the perfect end of a military government's policys. At that time a person's life was worth little more than the bullet that killed them.

IDEOLOGICAL SUPPORT: THE 'MASS MEDIA'

Victory or defeat in war not only depends on the quality and quantity of arms used (and the tactics and strategies employed). It also depends on 'the fighting morale' amongst the troops involved.

The mass media played a huge role in this capacity. It is controlled by and it represents the ruling class. Their propaganda wasn't only directed at the soldiers during the war. It was equally directed at the mass of people who stayed at home. The mass media exhalted nationalism, it promoted hate for the 'enemy' and justified all types of crime 'in the national interest'. It changed the course of events, hid defects and only published 'the victories'. The mass media of both countries portrayed its 'enemy' as monsters: the British called the Argentinians 'Argies' while the Argentinians called the British 'pirates'.

The mass media served as a vehicle for a specific ideology and neutralised or destroyed the spreading of alternative viewpoints.

Radio and TV programmes both exalted nationalist feelings during the war in Argentina. Artists, musicians, writers, painters and top intellectuals (save a few honourable exceptions) were all used to put the nationalist and blood-thirsty message across. These people offered their services voluntarily to help spread official propaganda, designed to convert the most cynical observer. It was all done to ensure

Continued on back page.

ANTI-MILITARISTS PROTEST

On April 2 1984, while thugs waved Nazis flags outside parliament (in Buenos Aires) and others burnt down the 'English Tower' (a monument built opposite the Retiro train station in the capital) around 200 people gathered in Once Square (Plaza Once) to demonstrate against the Falklands War (and not only the way it was run). Several groups, including pacifists, anarchists, anti-authoritarian students, gays and others took part. People going through the square (workers and passers-by) joined the demonstration to hear a speaker call for co-operation between Argentinian and British pacifists in the demilitarisation of the South Atlantic region, and of the demilitarisation of society as a whole. There were no whistles or insults during the demo. People came, listened to what was being said and, in some cases joined in.

A lot of those involved met again the following Saturday to evaluate the meeting and plan other activities. It was agreed to organise a meeting to discuss why people opposed the Falklands War. Unfortunately, the different views of those involved were too great to allow us to organise future activities together.

A LESSON IN HYPOCRISY

INTRODUCTION

It is now over four years since Argentina and Britain went to war over the Falkland Islands. Defeat for Britain would have destroyed Thatcher's political career. Victory has meant seven uninterrupted years of Conservative Party rule. Having served its real purpose (to prolong Thatcher's reign) the Falklands question has been quietly buried.

WHO OWNS THE FALKLANDS?

The speed at which the Falklands question has been forgotten by the British public is matched only by the speed it came into prominence in early 1982 as a result of an invasion by Argentina. From obscurity, a tiny bunch of islands thousands of miles away suddenly became of the utmost importance. People who didn't even know where the Falklands were, let alone know they were British, suddenly wanted to defend Britain's right to hold onto the Islands at all cost! People who had ignored the 30,000 murders committed by a succession of military juntas in Argentina from 1976 onwards suddenly began to denounce Argentina's appalling human rights record! The massive hypocrisy of such people (whipped into hysteria by the government) is difficult to come to terms with even now. Victory for Britain has only reinforced their prejudices.

THE MASS MEDIA

From obscurity to prominence, the Falklands War was skillfully portrayed in the media as a war between good (the British) versus evil (Argentina!). The lies and manipulation of facts by Thatcher, with the support of *all* the major political parties, were eagerly swallowed by a very substantial part of the population. In fact, most people didn't begin to question the war until after it was all over. When Thatcher won the war she turned her army against the miners and all the media tricks used against the 'Argies' were used to equal effect against 'The Enemy Within'. While Galtieri physically murdered his opponents by the thousand, Thatcher preferred to kill them by media smears or through the law courts.

So, what was the war really all about? If it was a war between democracy and fascism why had the British government always maintained excellent relations with Argentina right up until the invasion of the Falklands? Britain was even selling arms to Argentina! [Later used, ironically to kill British soldiers].

Despite the truth, years of a daily diet of lies on TV and in the papers have created a sizeable reactionary sector blinded from reality by nationalist bigotry. The Falklands War showed us how effective propaganda on behalf of the State and its institutions (including the monarchy) had been. Nationalism, directly related to fascism and passive before the Falklands, suddenly erupted as an aggressive, hysterical force. Anyone who questioned the war was a traitor and anyone who opposed it was a dangerous subversive.

The history of the islands, invaded violently in 1833 by Britain, was conveniently ignored. One hundred and fifty years later an unpopular Argentinian Junta tries to recover the islands in a desperate attempt to survive growing unrest at home while an equally unpopular British government, going through the worst economic crisis in fifty years (high unemployment, riots and strikes) prepared to lose the coming General Elections. Argentina's invasion of the Islands gave Thatcher a golden opportunity to unite the nation against a foreign aggressor and divert people's attention from their misery. Protests at home were of course suspended 'in the national interest'.

WHO WON?

It now seemed certain that Argentina never expected Britain to give a military response to the invasion. They didn't know that Thatcher was just as mad as they were! Instead of negotiating, Thatcher saw the invasion as an excuse to go to war and win the next General Election. She wasted no time getting a Task Force together, refused to budge at the negotiating table and declared war. To ensure the failure of a peace plan put forward by Peru, she ordered the sinking of the *General Belgrano*, resulting in 345 deaths, despite the fact that the *Belgrano* was heading away from the Task Force and therefore posed no threat to Britain. It wasn't even in the Total Exclusion Zone imposed around the Falklands by Britain at the start of hostilities. Having secured US backing, Thatcher was confident of victory and eventually 'won the war'. She also won the General Election while Galtieri's Junta collapsed.

We shouldn't forget that Thatcher *lied through her teeth* over why she ordered the Belgrano sunk. We also shouldn't forget that the decision to go to war is not open to debate 'in times of emergency'. During the Falklands War our so-called democratic way of life went out of the window. Other lies were told, victories were emphasised and defeats were ignored. There's also strong evidence to suggest that British security services murdered Hilda Murrell when she caught them by surprise going through her home looking for documents related to the *General Belgrano* sinking. The cold-blooded murder of political dissidents,



The Jolly Roger flies from HMS Conqueror on her return home

something the British government hypocritically denounces, now became a weapon used by both sides. The newspapers that screamed 'Gotcha!' when 345 Argentinians (including 17 year old conscripts) drowned when the *Belgrano* sunk chose to ignore Hilda Murrell's murder.

A DISASTER FROM START TO FINISH

Now Thatcher is ploughing billions of pounds into the Falklands to ensure it remains a British colony and we're back to square one. Argentina still wants the Islands and Britain still occupies them. The only difference now is that at least 1,000 lives have been wasted for the health of the State.

Leo (London)